



The President's Daily Brief

November 15, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PORTUGAL

Lisbon was relatively calm yesterday after the government agreed to grant a temporary wage increase to construction workers while a permanent scale is being negotiated. The deadline for the permanent increase is November 27. A demonstration scheduled by leftist groups for Sunday will keep pressure on the government to grant the workers' demands.

The Socialists and the Popular Democrats were unable to organize an effective counter-demonstration in Lisbon and were limited to pressuring President Costa Gomes--with little success--to take strong action against the leftists. Party activists at several locations in the north, however, turned out in large numbers to protest the Lisbon disturbances.

In the south, farm workers in Beja cheered a statement by security chief Otelo de Carvalho that he is "with the people." The main themes of the Beja rally were the overthrow of the Azevedo government and the restoration of former pro-Communist prime minister Goncalves.

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A party statement issued yesterday took the less radical line, supporting the right of the workers to demand higher wages. It disapproved restricting the freedom of movement of government officials.

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SPANISH SAHARA

Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania have agreed to govern Spanish Sahara in a joint provisional administration until Spain's withdrawal. The Spanish information minister has stated that Spain will be out of the Sahara by February 28. He said that details of the agreement would not be made public in Spain until the Spanish parliament has completed the formality--scheduled to start Tuesday--of "decolonizing" the territory.

Madrid has apparently abandoned its insistence on a referendum for the area. A Spanish source who talked to US embassy officials said "consultations" will be held with local tribal leaders on the future of the Sahara.

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The UN role, if any, in the arrangement is unclear.

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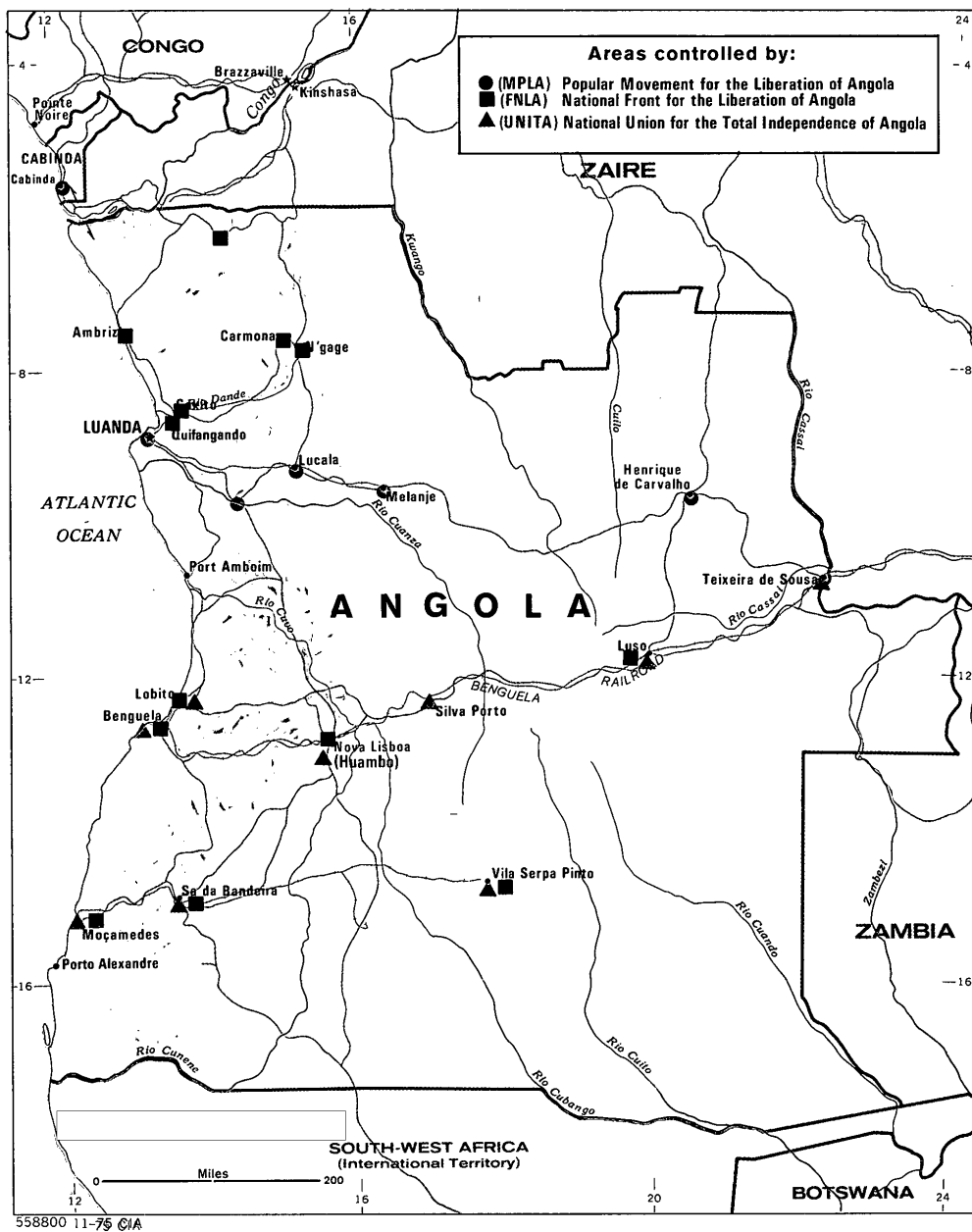
The agreement is a victory for Morocco's King Hassan, who has long sought to annex at least part of the territory. As co-administrators, Morocco and Mauritania will be able to select Saharan tribal leaders for consultations.

The outcome would be a "voluntary" decision to partition the territory, giving Morocco the northern region with its rich phosphate deposits and granting Mauritania the southern portion which contains iron ore. Both parties will benefit from a profitable fishing industry.

Algeria, which favors independence for Spanish Sahara, can be expected to seek support in the UN to reverse the trilateral agreement. Algiers will argue that "consultations" are not in accord with an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which upheld the Saharans' right to self-determination. Algeria would like to return the Saharan problem to the UN General Assembly.

Algiers will create as many problems for Morocco as possible. It will continue to provide arms, training, and possibly some "volunteers" to the Polisario Front, a pro-independence Saharan group, and may also renew its support of Moroccan dissidents.

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ANGOLA

Forces of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola captured the key rail city of Teixeira de Sousa on Tuesday

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The National Union apparently now controls the entire length of the railroad, from Teixeira de Sousa to the coastal rail and port complex of Benguela-Lobito.

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National Union President Jonas Savimbi hopes to reopen the railroad to Zambian and Zairian traffic by mid-December or whenever several sections of track have been repaired.

We cannot confirm reports--attributed to East European diplomatic sources--that some 400 Soviet "troops" arrived in Luanda on Thursday. Some Soviet military advisers and civilian technicians may well appear at any time, however, in view of the materiel Moscow is providing the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

It seems likely that Cubans rather than Soviets will pilot any MIGs that the Soviet Union may send to Angola. The Soviets have been using Cubans to support the Popular Movement in the field in order to avoid direct Soviet involvement.

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VIETNAM

A North-South conference on reunification is now meeting in Saigon. The decision to convene this conference indicates that Hanoi is now ready to proceed with a formal merger of the two countries. The process could be completed as early as next spring.

The joint conference will be a cosmetic exercise, giving the appearance of mutual agreement to what has been a political reality since the collapse of the former government last spring. Vietnam has already experienced de facto reunification under a single party and military structure with Hanoi essentially making all the important decisions. Heading each of the delegations to the conference are ranking members of the North Vietnamese politburo.

According to the official announcement, the conference will formulate plans for a new national assembly and new "common" state organs. The announcement gives the impression that countrywide elections will be held soon for the assembly. Southerners will undoubtedly be appointed to positions in executive ministries and commissions.

Following Saigon's fall, most early indications were that a gradual process of reunification would take place over several years. The communists themselves added to speculation by pressing foreign governments for diplomatic recognition of the southern Provisional Revolutionary Government, by maintaining that economic aid would have to be provided separately for each state, and by trying last summer to gain separate membership in the UN for both Vietnams.

By late summer these signs of a "gradualist" approach to reunification were disappearing. Public statements by Vietnamese leaders began to avoid any suggestion of an independent southern regime of indefinite duration. A promised civilian administration never materialized, and no foreign state, including North Vietnam's closest allies, was permitted to establish diplomatic representation in Saigon.

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Hanoi apparently decided that any diplomatic or economic benefits to be derived from two Vietnams would be outweighed by the problems flowing from such a strategy. The most fundamental concern to Hanoi, however, is the problem of control of the political process in the south.

With the end of the war, the question of the political role to be played by southern elements, heretofore relegated to front groups or the management of local problems, became a pressing issue for Hanoi. Although Hanoi firmly controls the southern segment of the Lao Dong party, a separate southern regime could, over time, only encourage independent southern tendencies. Hanoi's desire to limit the potential for such growth must have been a major factor behind its decision to move ahead on reunification.

There are tentative signs that the North Vietnamese will convene their first party congress in over 15 years sometime early next year in order to put the capstone on the reunification process. The congress will probably be held shortly after the elections for a joint national assembly and after formal reunification has been announced.

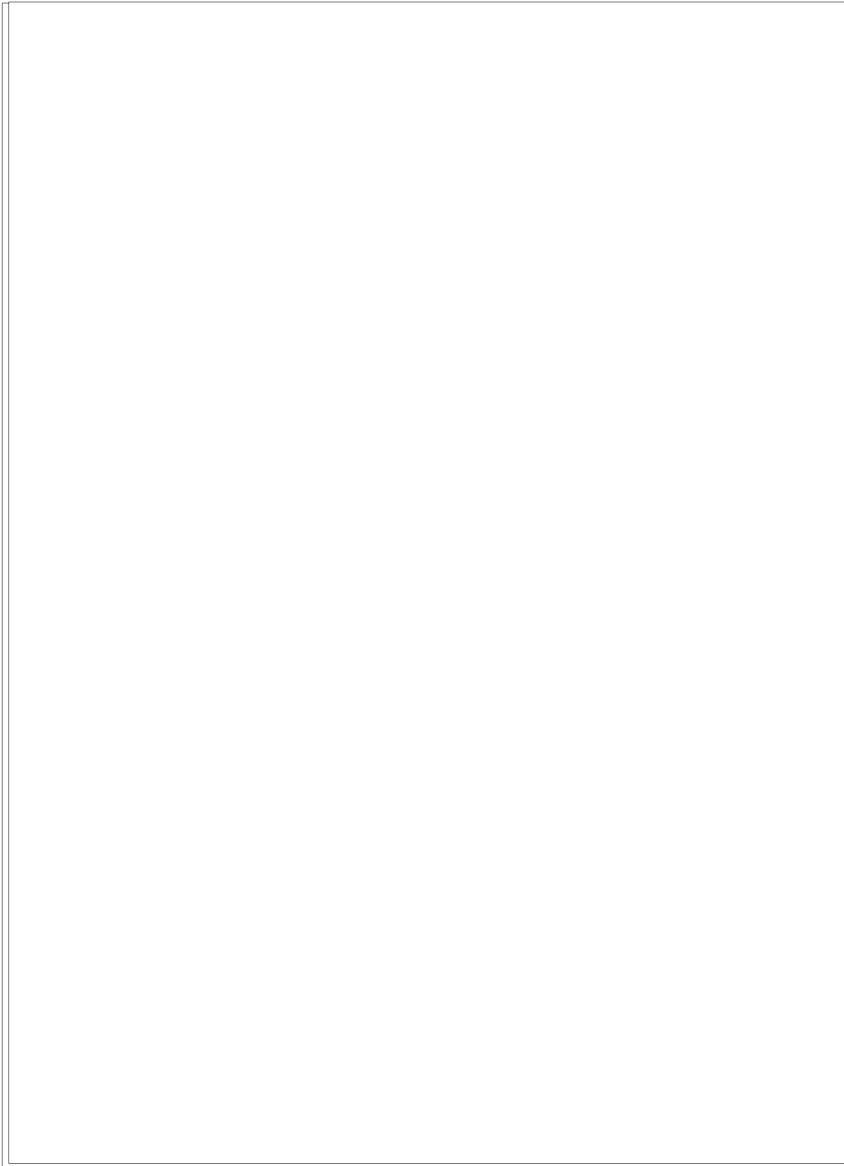
The congress will probably deal with the question of southern political equities. It seems likely to expand the Politburo and central committee by adding members identified with the southern party apparatus.

Such a step will hardly do away with the problem of southern resentment. The absorption of southern cadre into the northern party and government structure is bound to remain a sensitive political issue for years to come.

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The Mexican government will use herbicides to destroy opium and marijuana crops for the first time in an eradication campaign that begins today and will last through March 1976.

The Mexicans have long declined to use herbicides for ecological and political reasons. The decision to go ahead with them reflects Mexico's growing concern over recent criticism in the US Congress and press of its anti-narcotics efforts. This year's destruction campaign is starting early in the hope of destroying the plants before they can be harvested; in some areas, however, growers had planted early, and harvesting has already begun.

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The Pakistani government appears pleased by General Zia ur-Rahman's overthrow of General Musharraf's four-day-old regime in Bangladesh last week, according to the US embassy in Islamabad.

Pakistani officials had viewed Musharraf, who was killed in Zia's counter coup, as sharing the pro-Indian orientation of the late president Mujib, rather than the more pro-Pakistani, pro-Chinese, and pro-West outlook generally attributed to General Zia and to former president Mushtaque.

The Pakistanis are not being hasty, however, in seeking close ties with the new government. At present, they are waiting to see whether the new regime will send an ambassador to Islamabad. Pakistani officials do not expect India to intervene militarily in Bangladesh in the immediate future. They think India would make such a move only if there is an outbreak of Muslim-Hindu strife in Bangladesh and a flight of Hindus to India.

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